

Moving Beyond Parent Involvement to Family & Community Engagement: *A Handbook Linking Research and Practice*

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Data

Parents Surveyed in 2007 National Household Education Survey:

- Parents received note or email from school specifically about child: 54%
- Parents received telephone contact from school: 49%
- Parents received information about homework: 83%
- Parents received information about parents' role in school: 86%
- Parents of K-12 students satisfied with school: 59%

Herrold, K., and O'Donnell, K. (2008). *Parent and Family Involvement in Education, 2006–07 School Year, From the National Household Education Surveys Program of 2007* (NCES 2008-050). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.

What Is Family Engagement?

1. Families engaged with own children.
2. Families engaged with families of other children.
3. Families engaged with their children's school.

What is Community Engagement?

1. School community – people intimately associated with the school – students, families, teachers, staff, volunteers.
2. Community resources to support the school and its families.
3. School attuned to diversity of surrounding community.

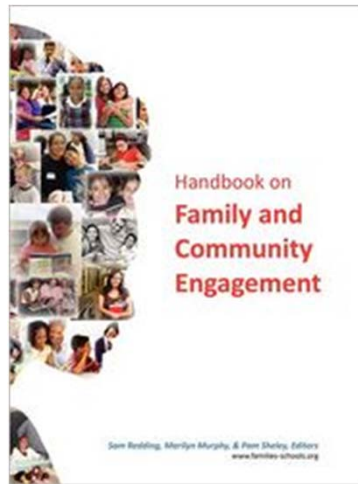
Comprehensive Family Engagement

- Leadership, structures (teams), systems (processes)
- Doing many things well over time
- Ongoing conversation
- Engaging families intentionally, with purpose
- Connecting to student learning (academic, social, emotional)
- Adopting a “school community” approach
 - People intimately attached to the school
 - Relationships among all members—leaders, teachers, staff, parents, students, volunteers
 - Roles and responsibilities
 - Knowing each family’s story

Student Learning Outcomes

- Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning
- What the research tells us
 - Strong link between family and school learning
 - Curriculum of the Home
 - Parental aspiration for children
 - Self-efficacy perception
 - Parents'
 - Students'

Handbook on Family and Community Engagement



- Published in September 2011
- 36 experts contributed chapters
- In partnership with U. S. Department of Education – Title I
- Download free at: www.families-schools.org
- Purchase published version from Information Age at: www.infoagepub.com

Why the Handbook?

- Bring best research together in one place
- Add the wisdom of many voices
- Present in a straight-forward manner
- Provide practical application
- Include ample references and resources
- Leaven with a dash of reality with vignettes

How the Handbook is Organized

- Introduction
- Part I: Framing the Discussion
- Part II: Families and Learning
- Part III: Families and Schools
- Part IV: Checklist of Suggested Practices
- Vignettes

Framing the Discussion

New Directions for Title I Family Engagement: Lessons From the Past

Oliver C. Moles, Jr. & Arnold F. Fege

The School Community: Working Together for Student Success

Sam Redding

Making Data Matter in Family Engagement

Heather Weiss & M. Elena Lopez

Engaging Families and Communities in School Turnarounds: When Students Can't Wait

Lauren Morando Rhim

Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning: Complementary Goals for School–Family Partnerships

Amy Mart, Linda Dusenbury, & Roger P. Weissberg

Engaging the Entire Community: The Community Schools' Way

Marty Blank

Families and Learning

Aspiration and Expectations: Providing Pathways to Tomorrow

William Jeynes

Self-Efficacy: Up to the Challenge

Kathleen Hoover-Dempsey

Curriculum of the Home

Herbert J. Walberg

Homework and Study Habits

Lee Shumow

Engaging Families in Reading

Holly Kreider

Reading and Literacy

Diana Hiatt-Michael

College and Career Readiness

Mary R. Waters & John Mark Williams

Families and Schools

A Framework for Partnerships - *Steven B. Sheldon*

Parent Leadership - *Anne T. Henderson & Sam Redding*

Maximum Homework Impact: Optimizing Time, Purpose, Communication, and Collaboration - *Frances Van Voorhis*

Differentiating Family Supports - *Patricia Edwards*

Bridging Language and Culture - *Patricia Gándara*

Minority Families and Schooling - *Susan J. Paik*

Association of Poverty With Family Relations and Children's and Adolescents' Socioemotional Adjustment - *Ronald Taylor*

Families of Children With Disabilities: Building School–Family Partnerships - *Eva Patrikakou*

Linking Schools to Early Childhood - *Kate McGilly*

Family Engagement in High Schools - *Mavis Sanders*

Family and Community Engagement in Charter Schools - *Brian R. Beabout & Lindsey B. Jakiel*

Family Engagement in Rural Schools - *Amanda L. Witte & Susan M. Sheridan*

Bridging Two Worlds for Native American Families - *Pamela Sheley*

Checklist of Suggested Practices

For State, District, and School

- **Shared Leadership:** Building strong, distributed leadership for family and community engagement.
- **Goals and Roles:** Setting family and community engagement priorities and defining the roles of leaders, teachers, parents, and others in meeting goals.
- **Communication:** Promoting communication among leaders, teachers, parents, students, and others and providing information and guidance for them.
- **Education:** Providing education and professional development for leaders, teachers, parents, and others to advance their knowledge and skills relative to the roles they play in family and community engagement.
- **Connection:** Bringing together people and groups to advance the goals of family and community engagement and sharing their experiences.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Establishing policies, systems, and procedures to evaluate and continuously improve family and community engagement efforts.

Vignettes

- **Jessica**—*William Jeynes*
- **Annabelle**—*Marilyn Murphy*
- **Tyler**—*Lee Shumow*
- **Xiomara**—*Georganne Morin & Holly Kreider*
- **Alicia and Dan**—*Diana Hiatt-Michael*
- **Angela**—*Patricia Edwards*
- **Billy**—*Sam Redding*
- **Tony**—*Lori G. Thomas*
- **Marie**—*Pamela Sheley*

Family Engagement Regional Specialists

- Alaska Regional Comprehensive Center - Jerry Schoenberger
- Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center - Anita Deck
- California Regional Comprehensive Center - Maria Paredes
- Florida and Islands Comprehensive Center - John Lockwood
- Great Lakes East Comprehensive Center - Frank DeRosa
- Great Lakes West Comprehensive Center - Caroline Wentzel
- Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center - Janet Brown
- Mid-Continent Comprehensive Center - Sharon Brooks
- New England Comprehensive Center - Joe Trunk
- New York Comprehensive Center - Crystal Francis
- North Central Comprehensive Center - Jane Hill
- Northwest Comprehensive Center - Deborah Davis
- Pacific Comprehensive Center - Canisius Filibert
- Southeast Comprehensive Center - Sally Wade
- Southwest Comprehensive Center - Maria Paredes
- Texas Comprehensive Center - Marion Baldwin

www.families-schools.org

- *Handbook*
- Webinars and PPTs
- Indicators in Action – School Community
- Resources for Parents
- Resources for Schools
- *School Community Journal*

Your Vignette

Activity

Vignette: A short story about families, kids, teachers that reflects real life and has a message.

- 1. Take a minute to think of a vignette you would add from your own experience.*
- 2. In groups of 3, tell your stories (3 minutes per story).*

Sharing a Few Stories

- Share a story you heard that made an impression on you.

Contacts

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Suggested School Practices
(short list)
From *Handbook on Family and Community Engagement*
www.families-schools.org

Shared Leadership: Building strong, distributed leadership for family and community engagement.

Goals and Roles: Setting family and community engagement priorities and defining the roles of leaders, teachers, parents, and others in meeting goals.

Communication: Promoting communication among leaders, teachers, parents, students, and others and providing information and guidance for them.

Education: Providing education and professional development for leaders, teachers, parents, and others to advance their knowledge and skills relative to the roles they play in family and community engagement.

Connection: Bringing together people and groups to advance the goals of family and community engagement and sharing their experiences.

Continuous Improvement: Establishing policies, systems, and procedures to evaluate and continuously improve family and community engagement efforts.

Is this a practice in your school?

Score: Yes = 2 Somewhat = 1 No = 0

Shared Leadership

- ___ 1. Appoint a school leader to improve and coordinate activities designed to improve the curriculum of the homes of children attending the school.
- ___ 2. Include in the school's decision-making structure a School Community Council with parents (primary care givers of currently enrolled students, not school employees) as the majority of members, operating with bylaws, agendas, and minutes.
- ___ 3. Create opportunities to develop and engage parent leaders.

Goals and Roles

- ___ 1. Establish a school policy and expectations for family engagement.
- ___ 2. Develop a homework policy including grade-level guidelines for amounts of homework.
- ___ 3. Ensure that teachers play a critical role in building parents' sense of self-efficacy for support of students' learning.
- ___ 4. Assert the principal's leadership in teachers' development of personal self-efficacy for involving parents.
- ___ 5. Assert the principal's leadership in family involvement and school-wide efforts to support parents' sense of efficacy for involvement, and include the topic in faculty discussions.
- ___ 6. In planning, link family and community involvement activities to specific goals, consistent with and supportive of those established by the School Improvement (or Leadership) Team.

- ___ 7. Emphasize the importance of families' home involvement to children's school success.
- ___ 8. Include in the school budget a line item for family engagement with a portion allocated for the training and support of parent leaders.
- ___ 9. Establish school transition teams that include parents to assist in student transitions between schools and beyond school.

Communication

- ___ 1. Provide specific, accessible information, guidelines, and resources to help parents help their children with assigned homework.
- ___ 2. Communicate regularly about homework expectations and respond to student and family concerns as issues arise.
- ___ 3. Share homework challenges and successes with colleagues over the course of the school year and coordinate assignments across teachers or subjects to avoid overburdening students with multiple projects simultaneously.
- ___ 4. Establish a predictable communication routine with families, including: (a) contacting families before the school year starts to let them know that school personnel are looking forward to working with them as partners in educating their child; (b) offering who the point person/s will be for the year, as well as the best ways to contact them; (c) setting up times or intervals for regular communication; and (d) any information pertaining to the review or reevaluation of the child's progress.
- ___ 5. Establish regular, bidirectional communication mechanisms between home and school, such as two-way home-school notes.
- ___ 6. Use multiple means of communicating with parents (websites, notes to home, bulletin boards, face-to-face meetings, home visits) that are two-way, allowing for parental input and feedback.
- ___ 7. Provide parents with specific ways through which they can help the child at home, including concrete suggestions about how to handle academic and behavioral issues.
- ___ 8. Create a specific community relations plan that involves two-way communication with parents.

Education

Family Education

- ___ 1. Initiate school-based parenting classes that teach parents how to: (a) raise expectations of their children and (b) speak and act in a way that is supportive of their children and their accomplishments.
- ___ 2. Conduct an in-school workshop series for parents on improving the curriculum of the home.
- ___ 3. Provide an array of literacy activities/workshops for parents and their children within the school setting focusing on the particular skills that their child should be acquiring in reading and literacy so that learning becomes a shared experience.
- ___ 4. Set your scope and sequence for family education programs.
- ___ 5. Provide programs to help parents understand how to support their children's education; in immigrant communities, these should be run by parents from those communities to the extent possible.

- ___ 6. Offer workshops for parents to learn about and discuss their role in their child's education, including studying at home, reading at home, parent-child interaction, school-home compact, and learning standards.
- ___ 7. Train and use parents as leaders in family education programs.
- ___ 8. House parent educators within the school.

Professional Development for School Personnel

- ___ 1. Train teachers and administrators to become more familiar with the research on parental involvement.
- ___ 2. Conduct workshops for teachers and other educators on the home curriculum.
- ___ 3. Provide professional development for teachers about family engagement in homework.
- ___ 4. Provide professional development for teachers on family engagement and working with parent leaders.
- ___ 5. Conduct service seminars for teachers and administrators on the processes linking poverty to family relations and children's outcomes.
- ___ 6. Provide professional development for faculty and staff to build their capacity to work effectively with students' families.
- ___ 7. In schools with Native American students, train all staff on Native American culture, effective relationships with families, and the importance of children's social and emotional development, and expect the training to be demonstrated in daily work.

Connection

- ___ 1. Provide a welcoming environment, coupled with engagement that is meaningful and varied in format and timing, to increase access for and participation by families.
- ___ 2. Partner with community agencies to address families' own barriers to literacy, offering family literacy classes and other adult education opportunities.
- ___ 3. Create opportunities for schools, libraries, religious groups, and other community-based organizations to collaborate and promote communitywide initiatives that highlight the everyday importance of reading.
- ___ 4. Connect with a library with a qualified librarian accessible throughout the school day and after hours for family members as well as students.
- ___ 5. Provide a readily accessible and visible facility to be a family resource center, organized by a coordinator.
- ___ 6. Invite parents to an annual student-led conference.
- ___ 7. In schools with immigrant populations, hire or seek volunteers for parent liaisons who can connect the school to the local immigrant communities.
- ___ 8. Create a safe and welcoming space for parents to meet, and provide an attractive activity that will bring them in.
- ___ 9. Partner with and invite parents to get involved in the school community; identify a parent liaison to help facilitate language and cultural barriers through different venues (i.e., newsletters, conferences, meetings, events, etc.).
- ___ 10. Incorporate relevant events, projects, and curriculum that value ethnic diversity (combined with academic rigor and high expectations).

- ___ 11. Solicit and establish community involvement in the implementation of family intervention and prevention programs.
- ___ 12. Build relationships with formal and informal child-care providers in the community.
- ___ 13. Establish a “family space” within the school, with resources for families, a schedule of events, and open times for parent–parent and parent–teacher interactions.
- ___ 14. Create a structure for parent–teacher meetings that allows for sharing of information, goals, plans, and solutions for all children, and especially those developing learning or behavioral challenges.

Continuous Improvement

- ___ 1. Conduct ongoing and end-of-year evaluations of family engagement programs and practices.
- ___ 2. Include parents on appropriate school teams and groups and/or seek their input in decisions made by school teams and in plans for school improvement.
- ___ 3. Conduct a homework inventory and identify various purposes in assignments; edit or discard unsuccessful assignments, and consider ways to make homework more enjoyable.
- ___ 4. Evaluate the strength of homework assignments and policy through student achievement and student and family feedback; revise and improve each year.
- ___ 5. Assess the parent involvement climate with surveys, focus groups, and interviews.
- ___ 6. Disseminate and utilize research to provide knowledge and tools for teachers, counselors, and parents (i.e., workshops, training programs, college access info, ESL classes for parents); focus on alterable factors.
- ___ 7. Select and evaluate all staff based on their ability to work effectively with families and to attend to the social and emotional development of their students.

Sam Redding, N

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Handbook on Family and Community Engagement

Sam Redding, Marilyn Murphy, & Pamela Sheley, Editors

Acknowledgements

The editors acknowledge the support and guidance provided us by the U.S. Department of Education, especially Carl Harris, Patricia McKee, Gary Rutkin, Danita Woodley, and Fran Walter, for the creation of this *Handbook*. The timely and competent editing by Robert Sullivan, Lori Thomas, and Stephen Page resulted in a published version worthy of the expert contributions of the authors. Especially, the editors shower their appreciation on the authors, all scholars of high merit devoted to families, schools, and communities and cheerful in meeting the project's expectations and deadlines.

Foreword

For a half-century, we have labored in the light of the Coleman Report's finding that families and communities strongly affect children's school success, our work inspired by the belief that these influences are malleable. Improving America's schools takes different paths in turn, as research and experience reveal promising organizational structures and professional practices. Always, family and community engagement receives a rhetorical bow, even as we have often tackled this work with uncertainty, sporadic attention, and sometimes disappointing results.

The knowledge, wisdom, and insights of this volume's contributors reflect the accumulated lessons learned by people who walk different paths in pursuit of a common vision—that all children might benefit from schools, families, and communities united in their behalf. Finding the right chemistry for relationships among school personnel, families, and community members remains a vision not entirely achieved. Our hope is that this *Handbook* will bring us closer to the realization of that vision.

Our desire in preparing this *Handbook* was to bring together the best minds on the various topics related to family and community engagement and produce a guidebook that is solid in its research footings, practical in its presentation, and useful to people in the field. To touch hearts as well as minds, we have sprinkled throughout the book several fictional vignettes to remind us of the everyday lives of parents, teachers, and the children they hold in their care.

This *Handbook* is intended to provide educators, community leaders, and parents with a succinct survey of the best research and practice accumulated over the years. More important, the *Handbook* gives us a guide—a lean and lucid roadmap with which we can travel to a new plain in our quest for each and every student's academic, personal, social, and emotional development. We offer the *Handbook* as a skeleton on which the body of good work in the field can be built. That work is extensive, and the people engaged in it are a special breed, firm in their commitment to enhancing the opportunities for our youth and wise in their understanding that schools cannot provide that opportunity alone.

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Handbook on Family and Community Engagement and Family Engagement Regional Specialists

In collaboration with the U. S. Department of Education's Title I Office, the Academic Development Institute and Center on Innovation & Improvement have produced a *Handbook on Family and Community Engagement*. The *Handbook* is available free for download at www.families-schools.org or may be purchased from Information Age Publishing at www.infoagepub.com.

The *Handbook* is designed to guide state, district, and school Title I personnel in providing high-quality, research-based family and community engagement programs and experiences. Thirty-six experts on a range of topics contributed to the *Handbook*. Each chapter provides grounding in research and practical action principles for the field. A concluding chapter lists specific recommended practices for the state, district, and school. The *Handbook* is edited by Sam Redding, Marilyn Murphy, and Pam Sheley.

In her introduction to the *Handbook*, Helen Westmoreland writes:

This *Handbook* offers a broad definition of family and community engagement, seen through the lens of scholars and practitioners with a wide-ranging set of perspectives on why and how families, communities, and schools collaborate with one another. Taken together, the chapters in this *Handbook* sketch out the components of a theory of change for the family and community engagement field. What is family and community engagement ultimately in service of? What do families know and do differently when this work is successful? What educational policies and practices will help us realize these changes?

To support the use of the *Handbook* by states, districts, and schools, the U. S. Department of Education's Regional Comprehensive Centers have each designated a Family Engagement Regional Specialist. These Specialists will work through the State Education Agencies in their 16 regions to introduce a series of webinars for districts and schools covering the *Handbook* topics. The webinars will also be posted at www.families-schools.org for use by local groups.

The Family Engagement Regional Specialists are:

Alaska Regional Comprehensive Center	Jerry Schoenberger
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